

This I believe

Have you ever asked yourself, “How can I be like her?” or “How is she simply able to be that way?” I would believe most of us have actually asked ourselves that question at least once in a point in life. I am no exception. I never really believed that being soft-spoken would ever become a barrier or even an obstacle which I had to get past until presentations, public speaking and having to interact with strangers were thrust upon me. However, it is not within my power to be able to avoid these things, Thus, inevitably, I knew I had to step out of my veil of shyness and change. We are who we want to be and I believe I can become who I want to be, but in order to do so; I knew I had to take that very first step myself.

The seed could have very well been sown when I was in secondary one when meeting my friends; however the truly defined first step was my participation in Odyssey of the Mind Competition. Through the competition, I was able to forge great bonds with my team mates who are very enthusiastic, talented, and skilful in acting and performing, and they brimmed with confidence. Luckily for me, that confidence was contagious. My self-confidence had increased through working and communicating with them in rehearsals and prop making. I was able to become much more animated in discussions and it was easier for me to open up more. Though I must admit my performing skills are indeed lacking, I have contributed and made up for it through aesthetics and design of props and backdrop.

Despite that rehearsals were another thing. It was difficult to let go of myself. I was overly self-conscious of my own image which in turn reflected badly on my own performance even though I only had a few lines. My soft voice was another hurdle I had to overcome. However, Sally, one of our seniors in charge of coaching us admitted to feeling heavily embarrassed when performing ridiculous actions as well. The thought had comforted me greatly as it made me aware that I was not the only one that felt that way, she also added, “The judges will only see you once in a lifetime, even if you do something super embarrassing, you won’t even see them again!” Though I never told anyone, which was one of the greatest push I had, as I constantly rewound that line in my head during rehearsals and especially on the competition day itself. Reminding myself at all times that if I put in my all to make the puns and jokes funny, people would laugh, not at me but at the joke I was successful in pulling off.

In the end, thanks to all our hard work and efforts, we eventually achieved second place in Nationals and later advanced to world finals where we clinched sixth place in the world. Both accomplishments were unexpected to me and it provided me with a surge of confidence in myself and my own abilities. Since then, activities such as public speaking no longer posed the great threat it once had though nervousness is inevitable. What’s most important is that I have strived closer to who I want to be and am still striving.